

Message Text

SECRET

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12

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-09 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12 T-03

AID-20 IGA-02 ACDA-19 RSR-01 (ADP) W

----- 060901

R 150934 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3793

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

DOD

JCS

CINCPAC

CINCPACREPPHIL

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 MANILA 3021

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

DOD ALSO FOR DIA

E. O. 11652 XDGS-3 DECLASS DEC 31, 1988

TAGS: RP, PINS, PFOR, PBOR, MASS

SUBJECT: US- PHILIPPINE MUTUAL DEFENSE BOARD MEETING (MDB)
MARCH

1. TWO DAYS AGO I RECEIVED INQUIRY AS TO WHETHER IT WOULD
BE APPROPRIATE FOR GENERAL ESPINO TO ADDRESS LETTERS TO
ADMIRAL GAYLER AND MYSELF TO ATTEND SCHEDULED MDB MEETING
TODAY. IMPLICATION WAS THAT IF WE WOULD ACCEPT AND
ATTEND, PRESIDENT MARCOS WOULD ALSO, AS WELL AS SECRETARY
PONCE ENRILE OF DEFENSE AND ACTING SECRETARY COLLANTES
OF FOREIGN OFFICE. AS I WAS UNABLE TO THINK OF PLAUSIBLE
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EXCUSE FOR REFUSING, I SAID THAT ESPINO COULD OF COURSE SEND THE INVITATIONS (ALTHOUGH I DO NOT LIKE THE PRECEDENT AND WOULD LIKE TO KEEP THE MDB IN ALL NORMAL MEETINGS STRICTLY A UNIFORMED MILITARY AFFAIR). WE WERE TOLD THEN THAT MARCOS WOULD COME AND THE SITE OF THE MEETING WAS SHIFTED TO THE PRESIDENTIAL YACHT.

2. AS WE WERE ABOUT TO START THE FORMAL MEETING, MARCOS INTERRUPTED TO REQUEST THAT GAYLER AND I JOIN HIM IN ANOTHER PART OF THE SHIP FOR A PRIVATE TALK. PONCE ENRILE ACCOMPANIED HIM.

3. MARCOS SAID HE WANTED TO GIVE US HIS OVERALL APPRISAL OF THE SITUATION, INCLUDING DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVES, PRIOR TO THE J-2 TYPE MILITARY BRIEFING THAT WE WERE SCHEDULED TO RECEIVE. HE MENTIONED FIRST HIS GRATITUDE FOR THE POSITION BEING TAKEN BY INDONESIA AND HIS HOPE THAT SUHARTO MIGHT BE HELPFUL WITH TUN MUSTAPHA IN A PERSONAL MEETING WHICH HE HAD HEARD WOULD TAKE PLACE SOON. HE THEN DESCRIBED THE EXCHANGES WITH MALAYSIA INITIATED BY ROMULO, IN GENERALLY THE SAME TERMS AS HE HAD TO ME BEFORE AND AS REPORTED IN MANILA 2862. THERE WAS ONE CHANGE, HOWEVER, IN THAT HE SAID HE THOUGHT THAT IF MATTERS REACHED THE STAGE WHERE THERE WAS ANY DIRECT MEETING BETWEEN HIMSELF AND TUN RAZAK, THAT IT PROBABLY SHOULD BE DONE IN SOME NEUTRAL CITY AS HE WOULD NOT WANT UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES TO GO TO KUALA LUMPUR.

4. MARCOS DESCRIBED AT SOME LENGTH THE INTERNAL EFFORTS HE WAS TRYING TO BRING THINGS UNDER CONTROL. HE SAID THE SITUATION IN COTABATO WAS SUCH THAT THEY HAD TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO REOPEN MAJOR LINES OF COMMUNICATIONS BY REOPENING MAIN ARTERIES, REPLACING BRIDGES, ETC. THERE SEEMED NO ALTERNATIVE THERE AT PRESENT BUT TO GO ON THE OFFENSIVE TO TRY TO BREAK THE STRANGLE HOLD OF THE MUSLIMS ON VERY LARGE PORTIONS OF THE PROVINCE, WITH EXCEPTION OF MAJOR CITIES. IN CONTRAST WITH THIS, HOWEVER, HE HAD ORDERED THAT OFFENSIVES BY THE AFP BE HALTED IN THE SULU AREA WITH HIS TROOPS REMAINING IN A DEFENSIVE POSTURE.

5. MARCOS SAID HE HAD SENT EMISSARIES TO BOTH AREAS, EVEN THOUGH HIS MILITARY HAD RESERVATIONS ABOUT ITS WISDOM, TO
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TRY TO MAKE AND MAINTAIN CONTACTS WITH MUSLIM LEADERS. IN REPLY TO MY QUESTION, HE SAID THESE WERE MOSTLY WITH YOUNGER AND NEWER LEADERS, AND NOT THE OLDER ONES WHO WERE NO LONGER IN EFFECTIVE CONTROL. HE SAID THERE HAD BEEN FEELERS FROM SEVERAL OF THESE LEADERS WHO STILL SEEMED IN THE MOOD TO TALK, AND THAT HE DID NOT WANT TO TURN DOWN ANY POSSIBILITY OF AGREEMENTS THAT WOULD STOP THE FIGHTING. HE SAID IN SOME INSTANCES THEY WERE ALREADY DISCUSSING PRACTICAL THINGS, SUCH AS WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO THE FIREARMS NOW IN MUSLIM HANDS, HINTING THAT PERHAPS THE GOVERNMENT COULD BUY THEM AT RATHER EXORBITANT PRICES PROVIDED OTHER THINGS COULD BE AGREED* HE SAID THAT ANY AGREEMENT WOULD HAVE TO INVOLVE MEANINGFUL CIVIC ACTION AND VERY EARLY MOVES TO RELIEVE FOOD SHORTAGES BECOMING EVIDENT NOT ONLY JUST AMONG THE REFUGEES, BUT IN THE GENERALLY DROUGHT- STRICKEN AREA.

6. IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY GAYLER, MARCOS SAID THAT SOME OF THE PROPAGANDA LEAFLETS BEING PUT OUT WERE MORE DIRECTED TOWARDS HIM PERSONALLY AND AGAINST THE GOP THAN THEY WERE TOWARDS THE GOAL OF SECESSION. HE SAID SOME OF THE YOUNG LEADERS HAD EVEN SAID THAT THEY WERE NOT SEEKING SECESSION. IN HIS EARLIER REMARKS AT ONE TIME, MARCOS HAD SAID THAT, IF HE WORKED OUT SOME SOLUTIONS TO PRACTICAL PROBLEMS WITH MALAYSIA WHICH WOULD BE ENFORCEABLE THROUGH SABAH, HE WOULD THEN BE PREPARED TO "FORGET EVERYTHING". I ASKED HIM WHAT HE MEANT BY THAT REMARK. HE WAS QUICK TO REPLY THAT THERE WOULD BE NO MORE RECRIMINATION OVER THE FACT THAT THERE HAD BEEN A FOREIGN- SUPPORTED GENERAL UPRISING AMONG THE MUSLIMS IN THE SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES. GAYLER ASKED IF HE SAW ANY PRACTICAL MEASURES THAT COULD REDUCE TENSIONS OVER THE LONG RUN BETWEEN SABAH AND THE SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES. MARCOS SAID THAT HE DID. HE SAID HE THOUGHT THERE WERE PRACTICAL WAYS OF COOPERATION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SULU AREA, REGULATION OF TRADE, ETC., WHICH MIGHT WORK TO THE ADVANTAGE OF EVERYONE AND MAKE THE SULU AREA IN GENERAL A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE AND A MORE EFFECTIVE BUFFER ZONE BETWEEN THE TWO THAN IT IS TODAY.

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-09 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12 T-03

AID-20 IGA-02 ACDA-19 RSR-01 /149 W

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R 150934 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3794

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 MANILA 3021

7. MARCOS GAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT HE THOUGHT MUSLIMS IN THE SOUTH MIGHT ACTUALLY BE OVER- ESTIMATING THE SIZE AND CAPABILITY OF PHILIPPINE ARMED FORCES NOW IN THE SOUTH, AND THAT SOME MIGHT BE COMING TO BELIEVE THAT THEY HAD BETTER TALK RATHER THAN FIGHT. HE EMPHASIZED HIS DETERMINATION THROUGH ALL SOURCES TO TRY TO MAKE THIS SO. IN THIS PROCESS, HOWEVER, THE STRENGTH AND CAPABILITY OF HIS MILITARY NEEDED TO BE CREDIBLE AND HE AGAIN MADE A PLEA FOR ITEMS THAT WOULD BE IMMEDIATELY USEFUL, AS WELL AS EQUIPMENT WHICH WOULD ALLOW THE MODEST EXPANSION OF THE PHILIPPINE ARMED FORCES DESCRIBED IN THEIR RECENT COMMUNICATION TO US AND ADMIRAL GAYLER. WE TOLD HIM WE WERE WORKING ON THESE MATTERS, BUT WERE IN NO POSITION TO GIVE DEFINITIVE REPLIES AS OF TODAY AS THESE MATTERS WERE ALL UNDER REVIEW.

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8. MARCOS THRN LEFT US TO RETURN TO MALACANANG AFTER WHICH THE REGULAR MEETING WAS RESUMED, WITH MARCOS RETURNING AGAIN TO THE BOAT TO LUNCH WITH US. THE PRIMARY ITEM ON THE AGENDA WAS A J-2 TYPE BRIEFING OF THE ENTIRE SITUATION GIVEN BY GENERAL PAZ. HWE WILL RECEIVE THE TEXT OF THIS BRIEFING IN DUE COURSE AND WILL FORWARD IT AT THAT TIME. THIS BRIEFING COVERED ESSENTIALLY THE SAME POINTS AS GENERAL ESPINO'S LETTER CABLED IN MANILA 2769 (NOTAL) WITH SOME UPDATING PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO RECENT

CLASHES WITH MUSLIM GROUPS. THERE WERE SOME NOTICEABLE DIFFERENCES OF EMPHASIS BETWEEN THE J-2 BRIEFING AND REMARKS BY MARCOS. IT WOULD NOT BE UNUSUAL, OF COURSE, THAT THERE BE LACK OF COORDINATION BETWEEN MARCOS AND HIS MILITARY IN UNIFORM ON ALL MOVES AT THE MARCOS LEVEL.

9. WE WERE RELIEVED THAT THERE WAS AN ABSENCE OF PRESS ATTENDANCE AT THE OPENING OF THE MEETING AND THAT THERE WAS NO EFFORT FROM THE PHILIPPINE SIDE TO HAVE A COMMUNIQUE, WHICH IS SOMETIMES DONE WHEN UNUSUALLY IMPORTANT PERSONALITIES ATTEND THE MEETING.
BYROADE

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TAGS: MASS, PBOR, PFOR, PINS, RP
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SECSTATE WASHDC INFO BANGKOK
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